

protecting Social Security, knowing full well that Social Security is a pay-as-you-go system with the money going out as fast as it comes in. They are counting on the fact that most people will have no idea exactly how a pay-as-you-go system works.

But American taxpayers should be the happiest of all, because a balanced budget means lower interest rates, which means people can buy houses more easily, and cars. It is a good day for the American people.

WELCOME TO THE LAMP-LIGHTERS, EL PASO SINGING GROUP

(Mr. REYES asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. REYES. Mr. Speaker, this morning I stand here proudly and would like to welcome a group of young people from El Paso, Texas. This is a group of singers that is called the Lamplighters, that sings a positive message about life.

This group was formed in 1987 at Henderson middle school through the vision of Mr. Jim Marshall and the support of the principal, Mr. Ralph Chavis. The Lamplighters are a group that is made up of 40 middle school students ages 11 to 15, and they are sitting in the gallery to my left. They are here getting a firsthand look at democracy in action.

The Lamplighters sing a collection of 25 songs that include themes such as biculturalism, success, friendship, search for the truth, believing in themselves and understanding God. Their mission is to light up life with positive themes through song, a goal they always accomplish with every performance, such as this morning performing for the Texas delegation.

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Today I welcome the Lamplighters to Washington, D.C., where I am pleased they are here, and I know that they will experience firsthand and appreciate the excitement of democracy in action. Welcome.

SUNSET THE CURRENT TAX CODE

(Mr. THUNE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. THUNE. Mr. Speaker, I was disappointed this week to hear the President label Republican efforts to sunset the Internal Revenue Code as irresponsible. I want to tell you my definition of irresponsible. Last year only one in five calls to the IRS customer hotline got through. That is irresponsible.

The IRS sends out 8 million pages of forms and instructions each year, enough to circle the Earth 28 times. That is irresponsible.

Every year, Money Magazine asks 50 different tax preparers to prepare a 1040 form for a sample family. No two preparers ever arrive at the same answer,

and the results vary by thousands of dollars. That is irresponsible.

I am proud to be a cosponsor of legislation to sunset the Internal Revenue Code. There is nothing radical about accountability from a government agency or working towards a fairer, flatter Tax Code. If you want a true definition of irresponsibility, look at our current Tax Code. Maintaining the status quo is the most irresponsible thing that we could do to our Nation and to our future.

REFORM THE IRS

(Mr. ETHERIDGE asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. ETHERIDGE. Mr. Speaker, this House must reform the IRS. The outrageous recently released GAO report documents that the IRS unfairly singles out taxpayers in the South for random audits. The GAO reports that 47 percent of the random tax audits during the past 3 years were in 11 Southern states that represent only 29 percent of the population. More than 85 percent of those audits had incomes of less than \$25,000, many of whom depend upon the Earned Income Tax Credit for our working poor.

Why should an individual be three times more likely to be audited in North Carolina than in the State of Massachusetts? North Carolinians are honest people. Why should they be subjected to this kind of treatment? As a former small businessman and a Southern taxpayer, I am outraged at this report and call for immediate action to reform the IRS.

Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to join my colleagues on the Democratic side and those on the Republican side in passing IRS reform last year. The findings of that report provide some clear examples of why our esteemed colleagues in the other body should quit dragging their feet and join the House in passing reform.

HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES CONTINUE IN SUDAN

(Mr. PITTS asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. PITTS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to speak to the massive human rights abuses occurring in Sudan. The Khartoum Government, the National Islamic Front, is waging a war on the Christian and Animist South. The Northern army has committed horrifying atrocities against individuals and communities, including moderate Muslims who do not adhere to the Khartoum agenda. Women and children are sold into slavery. Young boys are conscripted to combat their own villages. Pastors often are thrown into wells, doused with oil, and lit on fire to burn to their death.

Much of the humanitarian aid in Sudan is distributed through Khar-

toum Government forces, who force conversion to extremist Islam in exchange for food.

On May 23, 1997, Northern authorities detained and imprisoned Mr. Faisal Abadallh, a Sudanese Christian accused of evangelism. In January of 1998, authorities charged Mr. Abadallh with 12 offenses, three of which could lead to the death penalty.

Mr. Speaker, the President acted wisely in imposing sanctions on Sudan in 1997. However, we must not leave the issue at that point. It is outrageous that this terrible suffering continues. Our Nation should continue to speak out.

SUPPORT THE SCHOOL INFRASTRUCTURE BILL

(Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it is appropriate this morning that we had in our chamber students from El Paso, Texas, the Lamplighters, formed from Henderson Middle School, the constituents of my colleague from Texas, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. REYES), because today is an important day for Americans. We heard just recently a disturbing study about the imbalance of the performance of our students in America in math and science. Well, today we stand on the side of our students and on the side of learning by offering to the American people a school infrastructure bill that will begin to go throughout this Nation and fix the leaking roofs, the falling roofs, the expanded crowdedness that we have in our school districts across the Nation.

The school infrastructure bill that the Democrats will be offering today will say once and for all that we want our children in America to learn in safe and secure conditions. Then we will add another 100,000 teachers to our communities, 100,000 trained individuals committed to teaching our children, committed to preparing them for the 21st century.

I ask my colleagues in this body to support this legislation and stand on the side of our children.

LIBERALS OPPOSE TAX REFORM

(Ms. PRYCE of Ohio asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. PRYCE of Ohio. Mr. Speaker, what does a liberal do when confronted with a tax cut? He opposes it. He condemns it. He becomes outraged at the very idea that Washington could get along with a little less and a family could do with a little more.

I opened up the Washington Post to find the headline, President Bashes GOP Tax Plan. Then turning to the New York Times, I find this headline: Clinton Attacks GOP Tax Overhaul Plan.